

legislation is an Urban Affairs priority bill and it is sitting on General File. Now LB 494 is a perfect vehicle for the Urban Affairs bill to be fit into LB 494. My feeling is that that is not the way you go about passing legislation but it is a lot easier to jump over the fight that will take place on General File dealing with increasing the amount of time for gas increases and the tremendous fight that will probably take place on Select File. The gas companies are not in support of the bill and they plan to fight it, which is I guess that is what they get paid for, the lobbyists down here. But it would be a lot easier for the Urban Affairs to jump over those two readings of the bill and just have a bill on Final Reading to read. The amendment itself, and I believe I can paraphrase Senator Withem on General File when he was describing the amendment, he said it was ill-conceived and ill-advised and he urged the body to reject it. Well, that is my feeling exactly, Senator Withem, and I think it is still ill-conceived and ill-advised to adopt the amendment at this particular time on Final Reading. I don't think it is a good idea to be pulling these bills back and attaching amendments. All they want to do really is stall the bill and just see what 1003 does, and it probably is not going to go anywhere, so they stall the bill, they gut 494 and put in that particular piece of legislation. 494 is an important piece of legislation to my district. As you all are well aware, Internorth recently merged with HNG. They sold the Peoples distributing, the Peoples retailing natural gas...

SPEAKER NICHOL: One minute.

SENATOR ABOUD: ...entity so that the constituents in my particular district now receive gas from a Peoples...they are still called Peoples Natural Gas but it is owned by a company down in Missouri. Now Missouri purchases its gas from Internorth, or whatever they are calling themselves now, Enteron, and so it just so happens that my constituents will be affected by it as well as the 33 or 32 communities in eastern Nebraska that presently receive natural gas. That is why it is crucial that this bill pass this year and it is devoid of any controversy. Unfortunately, once 1003 is attached to 494 it will become a very controversial bill and it will have a very difficult time of passing. I say we take care of the problem right now that is in 494, take care of that problem. Have the bill on Urban Affairs Committee, the Urban Affairs priority bill and the Urban Affairs bill